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Pulkkinen, Veijo

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The Damn Machine: The Role of the Typewriter in the Genesis of Aaro Hellaakoski's Poetry

*Veijo Pulkkinen
University of Helsinki¹*

Abstract

The present article examines the role of the typewriter in the writing process of Finnish modernist poet Aaro Hellaakoski (1893–1952). In his early period, Hellaakoski wrote solely by hand and used the proof stage for final revisions. On one occasion, this practice led to the publication of an unfinished work when the publisher forbade him from making any substantial changes to the text. Later, Hellaakoski acquired a typewriter in order to get the manuscripts of his works as finished as possible before sending them to the printer. Marshall McLuhan (1964) and Friedrich Kittler (1990, 1999), for instance, have argued that the typewriter imposed a radical change on the concept of the author and the writing process, and that it had a significant role in the development of modernist literature. However, by investigating Hellaakoski's manuscripts, typescripts, and proofs, the article shows that instead of shaking the fundamental concepts of literature, the typewriter could also be used as a means to control the writing process.

Keywords: Aaro Hellaakoski, genetic criticism, manuscripts, modernism, typewriter, typography, visual poetry

Introduction

The Finnish poet, geologist, and teacher of geography Aaro Hellaakoski (1893–1952) was very keen to be in control of the publishing process of his works. For him, the publishing of a work was not just about getting a text out to the public. Hellaakoski, for example, did not hesitate to complain to the publisher if he was disappointed with the advertising accompanying his works. Hellaakoski was also quite informed about book arts, publishing essays and reviews not only on literature but also

¹ This work was supported by the Finnish Cultural Foundation (project number 00160791) and the Alfred Kordelin Foundation (project number 170324).

on books as esthetic objects (Pulkkinen 2015). According to Hellaakoski, typography was essential to poetry because it was so closely associated with its printed form (Hellaakoski 1964, 61, 63). This explains his urge to take part in the design of the bibliographical features of his works. As the editorial director of the Karisto publishing company Väinö Hämeen-Anttila (1878–1942) once testified, Hellaakoski would even go over to the printing house to oversee the production of his books:

Hän [Hellaakoski] seisoo latojan vieressä ruoskana, kirjaansa valmistettaessa; valitsee kirjakkeet, määrää jokaisen rivin tekniikan, toimittaa teksti- ja kansipaperin tilaamisen, hankkii kansipiirroksen, luo karmean katseen kirjalliseen johtajaan ja paistaa rosvoluolan oven perässään kiinni. (Hämeen-Anttila 1925, 121)

He [Hellaakoski] stands by the typesetter as if holding a whip when his book is being made; choosing typefaces, determining the technique of every line, ordering paper for the cover and text pages, acquiring the cover art, throwing a gruesome look at the editorial director, and slamming the door of the bandit cave shut behind him.²

The role of the typewriter in the genesis of Hellaakoski's poetry was also related to his need to control the transmission of his works. According to Viollet (1996), a typewriter often functioned as a means to control the final phase of a text where it was reformulated and transcribed (16). This was exactly the case with Hellaakoski, although he acquired the machine relatively late in his career.

Hellaakoski's oeuvre is commonly divided into two periods. The early period extends from 1916 to 1928, and the late period begins in 1941 and ends with his death in 1952. During the over ten-year silence between the early and late periods, Hellaakoski concentrated on his scientific work and teaching. Researchers have noted a difference in the tone between Hellaakoski's early and late-period poetry, especially in his relation to subjectivity. His early poetry is characteristically individualistic and the Self is the center of the world, whereas in his late period, the Self gives way to a sort of pantheistic experience of existence (Kupiainen 1953, 480; Repo 1953, xxv–xxvi, xxviii–xxix; Marjanen 1958, 120–21; Holmlund 1995, 6–8).

The divide between the early and late-period poetry also marks a significant change in Hellaakoski's writing process. In his early period, Hellaakoski wrote solely by hand—even the manuscripts used as printer's copies were holographs. Moreover, he often took advantage of the proof stage to make final revisions to the poems. This changed in the early 1940s when Hellaakoski began to write again. Although he still composed by

² All translations from Finnish into English are by Veijo Pulkkinen.

hand, he ceased revising his poems in the proof stage. Instead, he began using a typewriter to transcribe his manuscripts and get them as finished as possible before sending them to the printer.

In what follows, I will study the role of the typewriter in Hellaakoski's writing from a genetic criticism perspective by investigating the manuscripts and proofs of two poems.

Genetic criticism (*critique génétique*) is a field of research that studies modern manuscripts. It aims to reconstruct and analyze the writing process of a literary work by studying its genetic dossier, that is, the remaining documents such as notes, drafts, working manuscripts, and proofs (Biasi 2004, 43; Grésillon 1994, 7; Hay 2002, 103). The first of the poems, "Aallot lyö" (The waves hit), was published in Hellaakoski's typographically experimental collection *Jääpeili* (Ice mirror, 1928) which belongs to his early period, whereas the second, "Syys" (Autumn), published in the collection *Hiljaisuus* (Silence, 1949), is one of the very few typographically experimental poems of Hellaakoski's late period. In my analysis, I will focus on Hellaakoski's use of the various means offered by the manuscript, typescript, and proof medium to control the visual form of the poem.

Typing Modernism

It is argued that the typewriter imposed a radical change on the writing process and that it played a significant role in the development of modernist literature. McLuhan (1964, 259–60), for example, refers to Charles Olson (1997, 245), who in his essay, "Projective Verse" (1950), claims that like musical notation the rigidity and spatial precision of the typewriter enables him to express how his poems should be read silently or aloud. McLuhan (1964) argues that the typewriter brings the author within reach of the resources of a printing house and thus combines composition with publication. The machine brings writing closer to speech and performance, like jazz improvisation where composing and performance are simultaneous (262).³

In a similar vein, Kittler (1990) argues that the typewriter broke the "media-technological basis of classical authorship" which was based on the conscious co-operation between the eye and the writing hand (193). The link in handwriting between the body and the text was replaced by a machine that produced uniform and discrete letters and enabled one to type without having to look at the text while writing it. Kittler associates this "blindness" of mechanical writing with unconscious automatic writing that was embraced, for instance, by André Breton and other Surrealists (Kittler 1990, 195; 1999, 202–4; see also Schilleman 2013, 16–17).⁴

3 A closer examination of the actual influence of the typewriter on literature is found in Emerson's *Reading Writing Interfaces* (2014), where she examines 1960s and 1970s Canadian concrete poetry. Authors such as Barrie Phillip Nichol and Steve McCaffrey put McLuhan's ideas about the democratizing power of the typewriter in practice by using it in ways that it was not intended or endorsed to be used (Emerson 2014, ix, xix, 93, 95, 105–6).

4 Following Kittler (1990), Gitelman claims that the typewriter obscured the connection

Although the history of the typewriter overlaps with the development of modernist literature, modernist literary expression is not dependent on typing. On the contrary, it would have been extremely difficult, if not impossible, for example, to produce Guillaume Apollinaire's calligrammes or F. T. Marinetti's poster poems with a typewriter. As Willard Bohn pointed out, most visual poets of the early 1900s composed by hand, E. E. Cummings being a notable exception (Bohn 1986, 3). This observation also applies to Hellaakoski, who did not use a typewriter when he composed his typographically experimental work *Jääpeili*. As a typographic device, the typewriter is very restrictive: it usually has, for example, only one typeface and type size, whereas a printing house normally had hundreds or thousands of alternative typefaces in different sizes.⁵

The typewriter probably did not have as much influence on modernist literature during the first half of the twentieth century as it is assumed. The typewriter did not replace handwriting but was rather a new tool introducing new possibilities, one that could be used side by side with other writing technologies. Sullivan has demonstrated that modernists such as W. H. Auden, T. S. Eliot, James Joyce, Ezra Pound, and Virginia Woolf were somewhat 'conservative' in their use of the typewriter. They drafted and composed by hand, and the machine was mainly used to type up the manuscript either by themselves or by a typist (Sullivan 2013, 39–40; 2015, 7). In a sense, the typescript was a means of control because it was primarily used for correcting and revising the text.

In Hellaakoski's case, as I will show in more detail below, the typewriter assumed many functions of both handwriting and the printing press but did not replace them. This holds true for most Finnish authors who used typewriters in the first half of the twentieth century, although Mika Waltari (1908–1979) in his guide to beginning writers, *Aiotko kirjailijaksi?* (Do you plan to become a writer? 1935), had encouraged them to compose directly on the typewriter (Waltari 1994, 30–31). Apparently his advice did not reach already established authors because, for example, many of his peers associated within or in the vicinity of the modernist group Tulenkantajat (Torch bearers), such as Elina Vaara (1903–1980), Arvi Kivimaa (1904–1984), Pentti Haanpää (1905–1955), Yrjö Jylhä (1903–1956), and Katri Vala (1901–1944), mainly used the typewriter for fair copying.⁶ There are, however, a few notable exceptions, like Jalmari Finne (1874–1938) who had already obtained a machine in 1909 and typed his works from start to finish. Speed of writing was the reason why

between authorship and writing. By replacing handwriting with the mechanical traces of a machine, the typewriter challenged the traditional authorship associated with handwriting, which was assumed to harbor personality or character as well as signs of gender, class, and education (Gitelman 1999, 208–9, 213).

5 Some early typewriters had a cylindrical typewheel instead of the common mechanism with letters on the individual type bars, like the Blickensderfer 5 (patented in 1889). The typewheel could easily be changed, which made it possible to have different typefaces (Adler 1973, 197–98, 248–49; Robert 2016).

6 My impression is based on an overview of these authors' manuscripts deposited at the Archives of the Finnish Literature Society.

Finne used a typewriter: it enabled him to write almost as quickly as he came up with text in his head (Finne 1915, 4; 1932–34, 30–31).

According to Sullivan (2013, 2015), typewriter composition did not become more common until after the Second World War. Authors like Jack Kerouac and Frank O'Hara associated typing with an esthetic of spontaneity: the typewriter enabled them to write quickly in order to follow the free association of the mind or record a fleeting moment or experience (Rosenbaum 2007, 72; Sullivan 2013, 250–51, 254–56; 2015, 7–8). From the perspective of control, the function of the typewriter changed significantly, as the esthetic of spontaneity also involved an antirevisionist attitude according to which correcting and improving the text only made it worse by removing it further from the original experience.

Sullivan's observations on the role of the typewriter in the work of revision by modernists show how its use has changed over time and also how it varies between authors. Instead of making assumptions and wide generalizations on the influence of the typewriter on literature or modernism on the basis of its mechanical features, it is important to study how authors have actually used the machine by investigating their manuscripts, typescripts, and print proofs. A significant precursor of this kind of approach is the late Catherine Viollet who published pioneering articles on the genetic study of typewriters (Viollet 1996, 1999, 2003, 2009). Her background was in genetic criticism, which provides a suitable theoretical and methodological basis for studying the use of typewriters since its aim is to reconstruct the writing processes of literary works by examining the various genetic documents of these works (Hay 1985, 152; 2002, 103; Contat 1991, 23; Grésillon 1994, 7; Ferrer 1998, 15; Biasi 2004, 43).

Proof-Stage Revisions

To understand how the typewriter influenced Hellaakoski's writing process, we have to start by taking a look at his early period poetry when he wrote solely by hand. In his posthumously published memoir of his literary career, entitled *Runon historiaa* (The history of a poem, 1964), Hellaakoski describes the writing of a poem with a terminology borrowed from metal-working. He divides the genesis of a poem into casting (*valaminen*) and final forging (*lopputaonta*). By casting Hellaakoski refers to the writing of the first draft or version wherein the poem's "overall structure" (*kokonaisrakenne*) and "verse structure" (*säerakenne*) take shape (Hellaakoski 1964, 85, 87, 89, 91). This corresponds roughly with what in genetic criticism is called the compositional phase, that is, where the idea of the work is concretized as a text (Biasi 1996, 26–27, 29; Grésillon 1994, 100).

The final forging is about finishing the poem. If the casting of the overall structure of the poem has succeeded, Hellaakoski starts its forging, which aims to simplify and clarify the poem. According to Hellaakoski, the wording of the poem could change substantially in this phase. Finding the clearest and most accurate words could take some time, and changes

made in one place could easily require changes in other places as well (Hellaakoski 1964, 87, 89).

In *Runon historiaa*, written in 1946–47, Hellaakoski reports that he finishes his manuscript with a typewriter. He had probably not acquired one until 1941. Before then, Hellaakoski had made extensive use of the proof stage in finishing his works. Usually his manuscripts were finished in what Marc de Biasi calls the prepublishing phase (*pré-éditoriale*) and Almuth Grésillon the finalizing phase (*phase de mise au point*). In this phase, the text is readied for publication and normally no further substantial changes are made to it (Biasi 1996, 32, 42; Grésillon 1994, 100). In his early period works, however, Hellaakoski used to make many changes to the text in the proof stage: additions, deletions, and replacements of words and lines.

In Finland, proof-stage revisions seemed to be somewhat common at the beginning of the twentieth century if we are to believe K. Malmström, who in his textbook on typesetting—*Kirjapainotaidon oppikirja: Latomisoa* (Textbook on the art of printing: The typesetting part, 1923)—claims that many Finnish writers had the bad habit of delivering their manuscripts to the printer unfinished and making substantial changes to the text during the proof stage. Publishers were not particularly pleased with this practice because the more times they had to re-set the type, the more it would cost (Malmström 1923, 79).

Sullivan (2013) has noted a similar phenomenon among the modernist writers whom she has studied. She is probably right in suggesting that the visual difference between the manuscript and the more finished-looking printed page enabled a more objective and self-critical rereading of one's text, which could result in additional revisions (38–39).

Hellaakoski's proof-stage revisions are most remarkable in the poetry collection *Jääpeili*, considered a forerunner of Finnish modernist poetry. In the collection, Hellaakoski utilizes various poetic devices common in avant-garde poetry such as free verse, colloquial expressions, parallel verses, onomatopoeia, omission of capital letters and punctuation, and experimental typography, yet without abandoning traditional devices such as meter and rhyme. During the proof stage, Hellaakoski works especially with the typography of the collection, but a considerable number of changes are also made to the text of the poems.⁷

The genesis of the poem “Aallot lyö” exemplifies both types of revisions that Hellaakoski made in the proof stage of *Jääpeili*. An investigation of Hellaakoski's use of the medial properties of the holograph manuscript reveals why it was necessary for him to extend the revising of the text to the proof stage (figure 1). No early drafts of “Aallot lyö” survive, which is typical of Hellaakoski's early period poetry. The only existing manuscript is a relatively finished version that also served as the printer's copy. It is written on a sheet of lined paper that allows one not only to write straight lines but to control the empty space between lines as well. The verses of

7 For a thorough study of the genesis of *Jääpeili*, see Pulkkinen 2017.

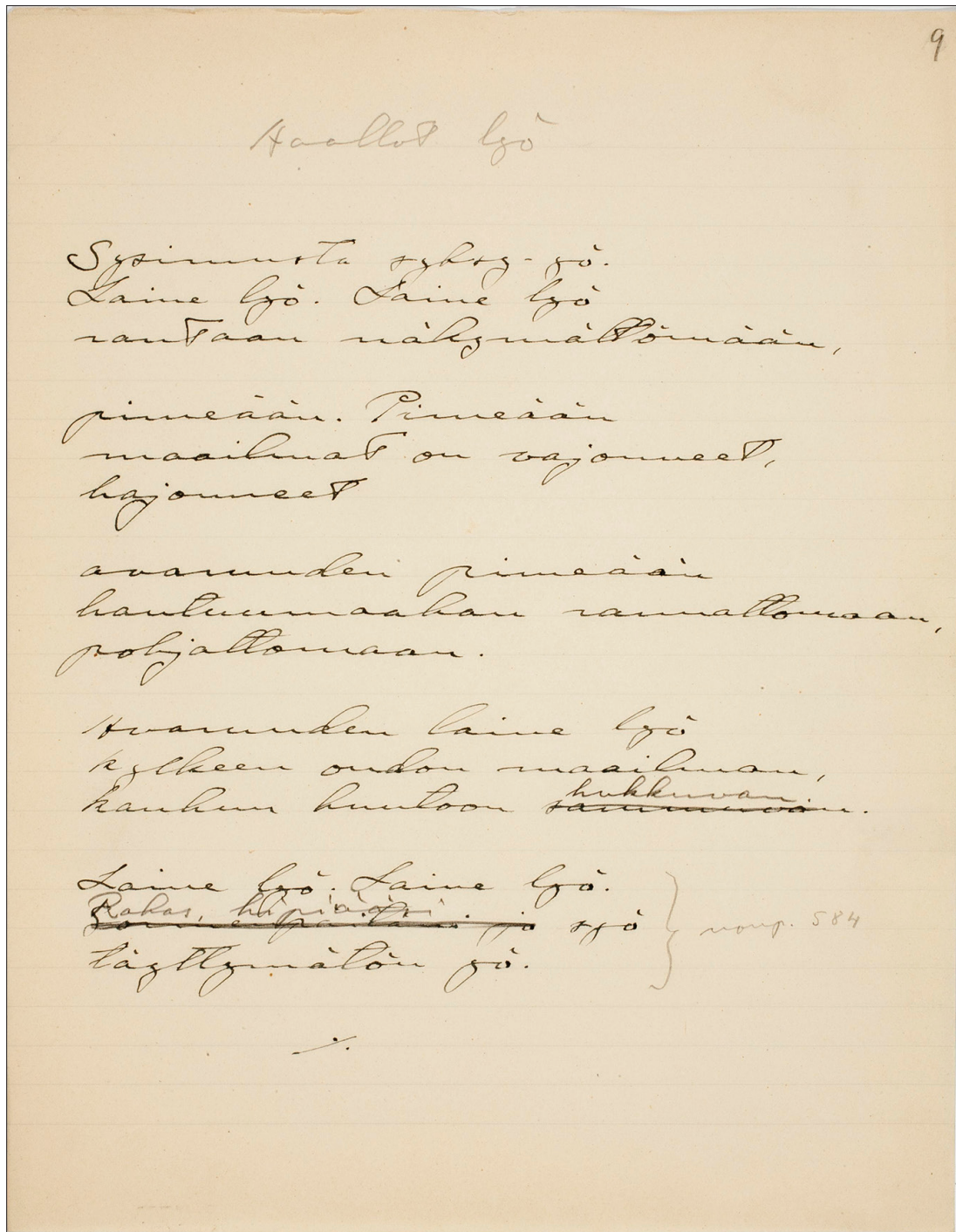


Figure 1. Aaro Hellaakoski, “Aallot lyö” (1928a). Manuscript. Helsinki, Archives of the Finnish Literature Society, SKS (scan SKS).

the poem are written on every line, except for every fourth, which has been left blank to separate every three-line stanza visually.

The manuscript is written in pen and pencil. The use of more than one writing tool often indicates different textual operations and genetic stages. It is common to use a pencil for rough drafts, since it can easily be erased, and a pen for more finished manuscripts. Unlike pencil marks, ink does not smudge over time. In the case of “Aallot lyö,” it seems that Hellaakoski copied the finished poem in ink, but later decided to make a

few more changes. These late revisions as well as corrections of misspellings are made with a pencil. This was a typical strategy for Hellaakoski. Among the manuscripts of *Jääpeili*, for example, only five of thirty-eight poems are written in pencil; all the rest are in ink. Almost every poem of the collection manifests these late pencil revisions and corrections.

As well as revisions and corrections, Hellaakoski has written the title of the poem in pencil. And, apparently, the names of the poems took shape relatively late in Hellaakoski's writing process, since altogether eleven of *Jääpeili*'s poems written in ink on the manuscript have titles later added by pencil.

In addition to the correction and revision of the text of the poem, Hellaakoski has used a pencil to give directions to the typesetter concerning the bibliographical properties of the book, such as typefaces, type sizes, the title page, and the table of contents. In the manuscript of "Aallot lyö," these include the page number and the note on typographic contrast in the last stanza. "(N)onp." is an abbreviation of the 6-point type size called "nonpareille." The number 584 refers to the printing house's type specimen book, *Kirjakenäyte kustannusosakeyhtiö Otavan kirjapainosta* (The type specimen book of the Otava publishing company's printing house, 1926), where *Jääpeili* was printed. The book lists and numbers all typefaces and sizes available there. By using the type specimen book, Hellaakoski needed only to pick the appropriate typeface and size from thousands of alternatives and mark the text passage of the manuscript with the specimen's running number. This was particularly helpful with a poem like "Dolce far niente" (Sweet idleness) that is set in several different typefaces and sizes.⁸

In the last stanza of "Aallot lyö," Hellaakoski replaces the expression "Sormenpäitäni jo syö" (already eating my fingertips) with the expression "Rakas, hipiääsi syö" (is eating your skin, my love). It is a minor but quite significant change. Before the replacement, the poem was merely about the existential anxiety of an individual in a world without end and meaning. The revised line conjures up a relationship between the poem's speaker and another person: love becomes a temporary counterforce against the emptiness of the world.

- 1 Pitch black autumn night.
- 2 A wave hits. A wave hits
- 3 the invisible shore,
- 4 into the dark. Into the dark
- 5 have the worlds descended,
- 6 decayed
- 7 into the dark space
- 8 into the graveyard endless,
- 9 bottomless.

⁸ For a discussion of the typography and genesis of "Dolce far niente," see Pulkkinen 2013.

10 The wave of the space hits
 11 the bank of a strange world,
 12 the ~~fading~~ **drowning** scream of horror.

13 A wave hits. A wave hits.

14 The unfulfilled night

15 ~~already eating my fingertips~~
is eating your skin, my love.

} nonp.584

(Hellaakoski 1928a)

Darkness eating the skin of the loved one is a more impressive image than the gnawing of fingertips, which brings to mind freezing fingers under a starry winter night. The new stanza echoes *Jääpeili*'s recurring *vanitas* imagery of old hymnals, where we are constantly reminded that men end up being food for worms. Hellaakoski might have had the decomposing of the human body in mind when he further revised the fourth stanza of the poem in the proof stage. In the manuscript, he has replaced the word *sammuvaan* 'fading' on line 12 with the word *hukkuvaan* 'drowning' that fits better with waves.

Turning now to the first proof of "Aallot lyö," we can see how Hellaakoski continues to revise the text of the poem (figure 2). He has corrected the printer's error on the eighth line: '~~rauhattomaan~~' (restless) '**rannattomaan**' (endless), and has also made further revisions to the poem's last two lines of the fourth stanza as follows: "kylkeen ~~outon~~ **maailman**, | ~~kauhun huutoon hukkuvan~~ **tuntemattoman** | ~~lahoavan maailman~~" (the bank of a strange world **an unknown** | the ~~drowning scream of horror~~ **decomposing world**). (Hellaakoski 1928b)

Moreover, Hellaakoski made further changes to the typography of the last stanza of the poem. The typesetter had set the stanza in a smaller type size according to Hellaakoski's instructions on the manuscript. However, Hellaakoski now wanted the lines to be spaced out as well. A probable explanation might be that the typographic contrast between the last stanza and the rest of the poem was not sharp enough. Making the size even smaller was probably not an option, since it would have made the lines too difficult to read. Nor would it have been possible to enlarge the body text of the poem, because then the poem would have protruded from the rest of the poems in the same section of the work whose body texts were set with the same typeface and size. Instead of creating a contrast with a different typeface, Hellaakoski decided to space out the lines of the stanza. He made the same change to four other poems in *Jääpeili*, which all had lines or stanzas set in a smaller type size: "Ensimmäinen tähti" (First star), "Dolce far niente," "Kesien kesä" (Summer of summers), and "Valtamerellä" (At the ocean).⁹

⁹ For a genetic study of the typography of the poem "Kesien kesä," see Pulkkinen 2014.

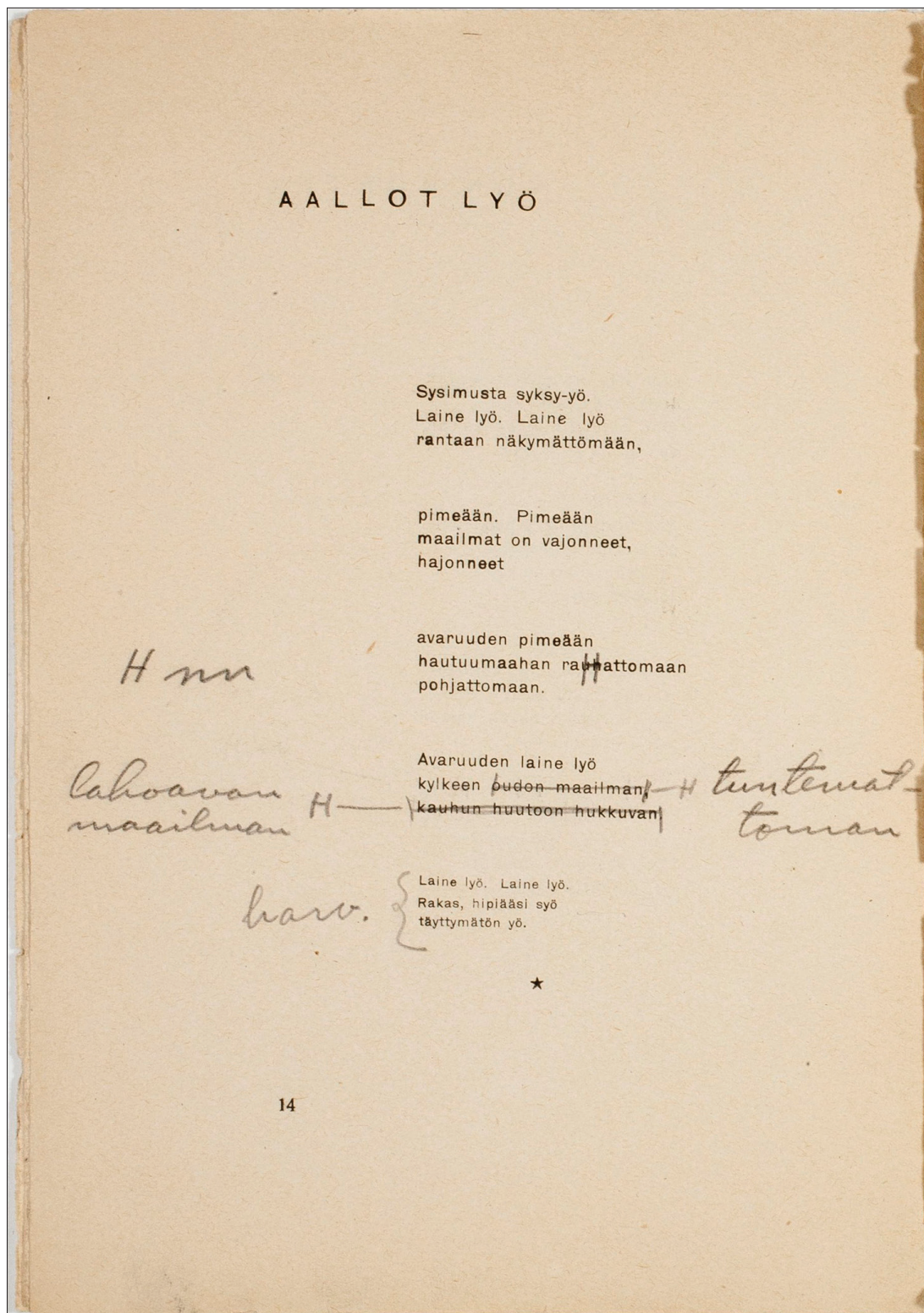


Figure 2. Aaro Hellaakoski, “Aallot lyö” (1928b). Proof. Helsinki, Archives of the Finnish Literature Society, SKS (scan SKS).

Interestingly, the idea of increasing the letter-spacing of lines in these poems did not occur until the proof stage, which supports Sullivan’s suggestion that the visual difference between the manuscript and the printed page promotes revision. In the case of “Aallot lyö,” it seems that Hellaakoski needed to see the proofs in order to realize that the size

contrast between the last stanza and the body text of the poem was not great enough, since there are no signs of a spacing out in the manuscript. Perhaps it was the increasing of the letter-spacing of the last stanza that sparked the revisions of lines 11–12, or vice versa. In the first version, the following stanza was set only in a smaller type size, which can be interpreted to represent the “drowning scream of horror,” whereas the spaced-out lines of the latter version reflect the idea of decomposition introduced in the revised 12th line.

10 The wave of the space hits
11 the bank of a ~~strange world~~, **an unknown**
12 ~~the drowning scream of horror~~. **decomposing world**
(Hellaakoski 1928b)

The Damn Machine

Once, Hellaakoski’s habit of revising his proofs led to the release of an unfinished work. According to Hellaakoski, he had agreed with the publisher Karisto that he could revise his collection of poetry *Maininki ja vaahtopää* (The swell and the whitecap, 1924) during the proof stage. However, the publisher first delayed the typesetting of the collection and then claimed being in a hurry as an excuse to forbid Hellaakoski from making any changes to the proofs except for correcting the printer’s errors (Hellaakoski 1964, 55).

Tämän opetuksen jälkeen olen pitänyt varani, etten toistamiseen ole ainoankaan kustantajan edessä joutunut kerjuriksi. En liioin ole tarjonnut painoon luonnostavaroita, vaikka niitä tosin olisi paljon helpompi viimeistellä ladottuina kuin käsikirjoituksina. Kirjoituskoneen, joka asiassa voi auttaa, hankin vasta 1940, ja silloin vartavasten runojen takia. (Hellaakoski 1964, 57)

After this lesson, I have looked to my laurels so that I haven’t been reduced to beggary before any publisher again. Nor have I submitted drafts to the printer even though they could be finished more easily when typeset than as manuscripts. The typewriter—that I didn’t buy until 1940, and especially for the poems—can be of assistance in the matter.

Hellaakoski’s acquisition of a typewriter was thus highly motivated by a humiliating loss of control over the publication process. It took, however, seventeen years after the incident until he got his first typewriter. There exists a postcard written while Hellaakoski stayed at his parents’ home in Pispala, Tampere, in March 1941 (figure 3). This postcard, addressed to Hellaakoski’s wife, Lempi Hellaakoski (née Aaltonen, 1892–1984), is probably one of the first documents he wrote with his typewriter, and it shows how he struggled to control the machine.

Pispala I.III.194I

R.L!

Tässä tämä peijakkaan kone nyt on. Ja allekirjoittanut ahkeroi harjoittelemisessa. _ Kattos nyt, kun tuli ajatus viiva liian alas. - Nytpäs osui viiva kohdalleen. Eikä näy pahasti tulevan mui takaan kommelluksia. Mutta hidasta tämä ~~mä~~ on. Radio lisäksi pauhaa iltauutisia ja tekee häiriötä. "Nuorilla kansoilla" kuuluu olevan oikeuksia.

Pispalan vanhukset jaksavat hyvin. Mummu hätistää, että "paneppas nyt pois se kone, Aaro, jäsitte illallista syömään ja nukkumaan!?" - Ja Mummu ärisee: "eipä se ole kuulevinaan!" - Ja: "syötkö sinä pimää?" - Peijakas, enhän minä silloin pimää syö, kun kirjoitan kultille!

Mutta täytynee lopettaa tältä il-
lalta. Huomenna jatkan tuonne toiselle
puolelle. Tämä puoli alkaakin jo loppua.
Eikä tuo kortin loppu pysy koneessakaan.
Hyvää yötä sinulle ja lapsille!

Figure 3. Aaro Hellakoski, Postcard to Lempi Hellaakoski (1941).
Helsinki, Archives of the Finnish Literature Society, SKS (scan SKS).

Here the damn machine is now. And the present writer keeps busy practicing. _ Look now, how the dash ended too low. – Well, now the dash is in the right place. I don't seem to make many other errors either. But this is slow. The radio is also blasting the evening news and causing a disturbance. I hear "young nations" also have rights.

The elderly of Pispala feel well. Grandma orders: "put that machine away already, Aaro, and then come to supper and go to sleep!" – And grandma growls: "he acts as if he does not hear." – And: "do you eat buttermilk?" – Damn, I am not eating buttermilk when I am writing to my darling!

But I think I should stop for this evening. I will continue on the other side tomorrow. This side is already running out. Nor does the end of the card stay in place in the machine. Good night to You and the children!¹⁰

Interestingly, Hellaakoski's postcard resembles Kerouac's and O'Hara's esthetic of spontaneity in describing what takes place in his close vicinity at the moment he writes. The text is also metapoetic in the sense that it depicts the very act of typing, or learning to type, and the various disturbing elements surrounding its author. In a word, the text represents its own genesis. Nevertheless, the nature of the genesis of Hellaakoski's poetry was quite different.

Although he had bought a typewriter, Hellaakoski continued to compose his poetry by hand. In the genesis of Hellaakoski's poetry, the machine was primarily used for transcribing. Judging from the extant drafts and manuscripts of the collection *Uusi runo* (The new poem, 1943b), it seems that Hellaakoski drafted his poems with a pencil. Some of the poems emerge almost finished whereas others need more work and he tries out different verses. When the poem appears to be nearly finished, Hellaakoski transcribes it with the typewriter. Usually he makes corrections and revisions to the typescripts with a pencil. In the case of *Uusi runo*, he has also made yet another transcription of the whole collection after revising the first typescript. But there are still new revisions on the second transcript as well.

Hellaakoski's practice is thus another example of what Catherine Viollet has termed the classical use of the typewriter. In such cases, the

10 "[. . .] Tässä tämä peijakkaan kone nyt on. Ja allekirjoittanut ahkeroin harjoittelemisessa. _ Kattos nyt, kun tuli ajatusviiva liian alas. - Nytpäs osui viiva kohdalleen. Eikä näy pahasti tulevan muitakaan kummelluksia. Mutta hidasta tämä on. Radio lisäksi pauhaa iltauutisia ja tekee häiriötä. 'Nuorilla kansoilla' kuuluu olevan oikeuksia.

Pispalan vanhukset jaksavat hyvin. Mummu hätistää, 'että paneppas nyt pois se kone, Aaro, jäsitte illallista syömään ja nukkumaan!' - Ja mummu ärisee: 'eipä jse ole kuulevinaan.' - Ja: 'syötkö sinä pimää?' - Peijakas, enhän minä silloin pimää syö, kun kirjoitan kultille!

Mutta täytynee lopettaa tältä illalta. Huomenna jatkan tuonne toiselle puolelle. Tämä puoli alkaakin jo loppua. Eikä tuo kortin loppu pysy koneessakaan. Hyvää yötä sinulle ja lapsille!"

typewriter acts as an intermediary between the manuscript and the printed book. It is used as a tool to control the final phase of the text, where it is cleaned up and prepared for publication. According to Viollet, many writers have claimed that typing helps to distance oneself from one's text and to take a more objective stance toward it (Viollet 1999, 16–17; Sullivan 2015, 7).

Michel Butor, for instance, associates the role of the typewriter with the author's urge to possess the text. Seeing the text typed or printed for the first time distances the text from its author, which then triggers an urge to repossess the text. He refers to Michel de Montaigne's, Honoré de Balzac's, and Marcel Proust's abundant marginal notes and numerous proof-stage revisions as a way of reappropriating their texts, which are already slipping out of their hands, by making them more and more idiomatic. The typewriter speeds up this dialogue between the author and the text with its print-like characters (Butor 1981, 428; Plyley James 1985, 509).

In Hellaakoski's case, the typewriter has replaced the proof stage as the phase where he makes the last revisions to his poems. By freeing him from the ties to the proof stage and the unpleasant surprises associated with it, like the publisher's possible intervention, the typewriter gave Hellaakoski more control over the writing process.

There is, however, an interesting case where the proof stage did not progress as smoothly as it could have. The long poem "Syys" from the collection *Hiljaisuus* is one of the few typographically experimental poems written in Hellaakoski's later period. The poem is also free of punctuation and capital letters. According to the date on the manuscript, it was written between October 1948 and February 1949 (figure 4).

"Syys" is a personification of autumn as a mute and tongueless man walking in the rain by the edge of a forest. On his back, Autumn carries a knapsack filled with the colors of the summer past with which he paints Nature before the coming of winter. The poem can be interpreted as a variation of the *vanitas vanitatum* theme that is frequent in Hellaakoski's oeuvre (Leikola 1990, 163). The figure of Autumn brings to mind the Preacher in the Book of Ecclesiastes who proclaims the futility and absurdity of life before death but still maintains that we can enjoy the few gifts of God, like the company of our nearest and dearest, the fruits of our labor. By painting the dying landscape in flaming colors, Autumn obstinately celebrates life.

The manuscript of "Syys" is a typescript with additional pencil markings. The strategy of revision is similar to Hellaakoski's early period manuscripts, where he added pencil marks on the transcription of a poem written in ink. However, judging by the handwriting, the page number is written with a pen probably by someone other than Hellaakoski. The same applies to the remark on the lower left corner, "Hyvä, moderni

S y y s 17

suven viimeistä konttia kantain
 sitä värien konttia niin
 sitä painojen konttia niin
 joka unohdettiin

syys asteli mykkä ja kielelön mies
 mutta korvaton ei kenties

ohi märkien metsänrantain
 ja saappaan sisällä lotisi vettä
 ja kurkkua kouraisi että

suven lintua ei
 joka huolet vei
 ei kukkaa-nukkaa-tukkaa
 ei liikoja illusioita

tohinoina vain kohinoina
 oli harmaja pilvi ja puu
 ja huohotti tuulensuu
 oli aalto pahalla päällä

sadekuuroja roiskahti tuolla ja täällä
 mitä toi suvi kai sen veikin
 pois jälkeen lyhyen leikin

syys muisti nyt on lokakuu
 pian riisuutuu
 jo pensas ja puu
 ja maa on kolkko ja marras
 lumen luutima lahden parras

syys kauan asteli käyden
 sade niskassaan
 yli pellon ja maan
 kera kontin painavan-täyden

yhä ahkkyvin suin olemattomin kielin
 työtötyhjin kourin ei tyhjin mielin
 ja tuumi yksi on varmaa
 tämä kontti ei ole harmaa
 se karjuu istu ja pala
 jos purkaa en sitä ala

ja niinpä hän ilmeim mietteläin
 suti huitaisi tuonne ja tänne päin
 ilon raikuvan niittyyn ja hakaan
 ja harteille metsän vakaan
 hän maalasi manttelit upeat niin
 kuin tulen ja lieskan paraadiin
 ja hän itsekin ihmetteli
 miten tyhjäät täyttyi ja eli

ja kaikki se leimusi kaikki se paloi
 kipukontistiaan mitä syksy valoi
 yli uskosta riisutun yksinäisen
 ja viheliäisen
 hän viskasi sen yli lokaisen maan
 vajavuutensa laukaisi pois kokonaan

syys maalasi niin syys maaksi näin
 väriläikkiiä uusia välkyttäin
 pois hävisi harmaa musta
 sai kaikki oivallusta

ja syksy on vaiti ja ihmettelee
 yhä vieläkin maalaillee
 kun talvi jo tuo hopeansa ja muut
 ja riisuu kaikki puut.

10.48-2.49

Figure 4. Aaro Hellaakoski, "Syys" (1949b). Typescript, Helsinki, Archives of the Finnish Literature Society, SKS (scan SKS).

maalaus tämä!” (This is an excellent modern painting!), probably made by the editor.

Among Hellaakoski's pencil marks concerning the text of the poem is one correction of a missing letter “o” from the word *pois* ‘away’ on line 49 and three word replacements on lines 8 (~~lotisi~~ ‘squelched’ **hulisi** ‘gurgled’), 30 (~~yhä~~ ‘still’ **jos** ‘if’), and 31 (~~työtyhjin~~ ‘empty’ **ei tyhjin** ‘not empty’). Hellaakoski has also made pencil notes on the typography of the poem. He wished to contrast all indented lines typographically with the body text of the poem by setting them in a smaller type size: “Petiitillä nämä! j.n.e. keskellä ja oikealla olevat säkeet” (These in petit! etc. the lines in the middle and on the right).

Hellaakoski takes advantage of several means offered by the typewriter to shape the visual form of text. First, the title “S y y s” has been spread out by adding a space between the letters, which is quite conventional in typescripts at the time. Second, Hellaakoski has probably made use of two different tab stops in aligning the two groups of differently indented lines. The third and the most interesting feature is the use of two types of leading, that is, line spacing. The body text of the poem is double-spaced and the indented lines are single-spaced.

In his typescripts Hellaakoski normally uses double-spacing for shorter poems and single-spacing for longer ones in order to fit the poem onto one page, if possible. Usually Hellaakoski adds two empty lines between every stanza, but in the manuscripts of the longer *Hiljaisuus* poems there is only one empty single-spaced line between the stanzas. However, in the manuscript of “Syys” there are no empty lines at all between stanzas.

Hellaakoski's use of two different line spacings caused some confusion for the typesetter of “Syys.” From the proofs we can see that the typesetter has followed Hellaakoski's directions and set the indented lines in a smaller type size (figures 5–7). The leading between the indented lines is also narrower than between the lines of the body text of the poem, which corresponds to Hellaakoski's use of two different line spacings. However, Hellaakoski's proofreading marks indicate a severe problem with the stanza breaks. The typesetter has separated the indented lines and groups of lines from the body text with wide empty spaces which extend the poem over four pages. In the proofs of the title page of the collection, Hellaakoski instructs the typesetter to narrow the leading of “Syys” “so that it fits on three pages, as if the whole poem were just one stanza.”¹¹

It seems that the typesetter interpreted the use of line spacing in the typescript differently than Hellaakoski intended. I think Hellaakoski tried to use the typewriter creatively and overcome the constraints of the machine. By using two different line spacings Hellaakoski probably emulated the visual appearance of size contrast. In other words, he transmuted

11 “[. . .] niin että se mahtuu kolmelle sivulle, miltei kuin koko runo olisi yhtä ainoaa värsyä.”

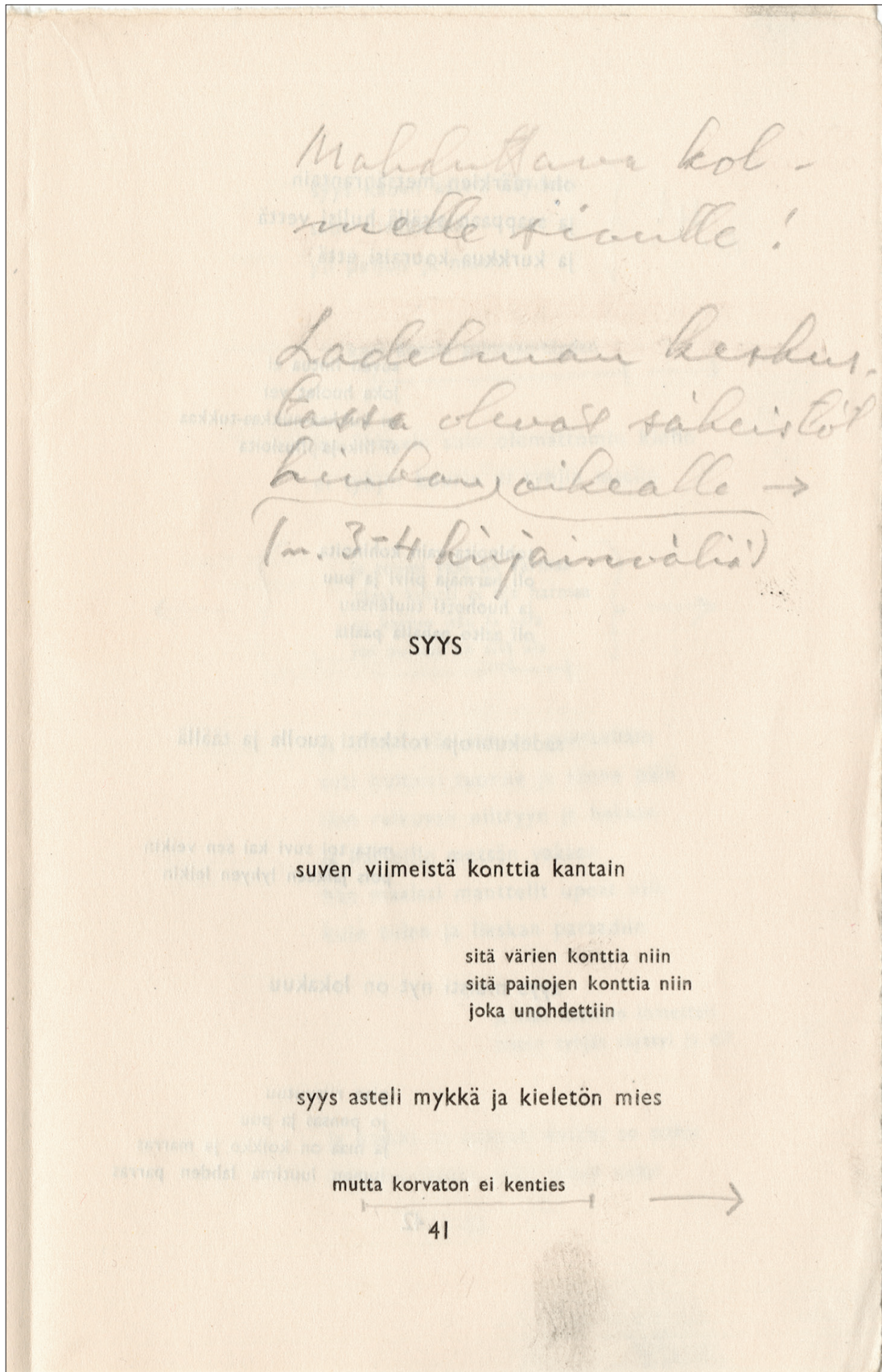


Figure 5. Aaro Hellaakoski, "Syys" (1949b). First page of the proof. Helsinki, Archives of the Finnish Literature Society, SKS (scan SKS).

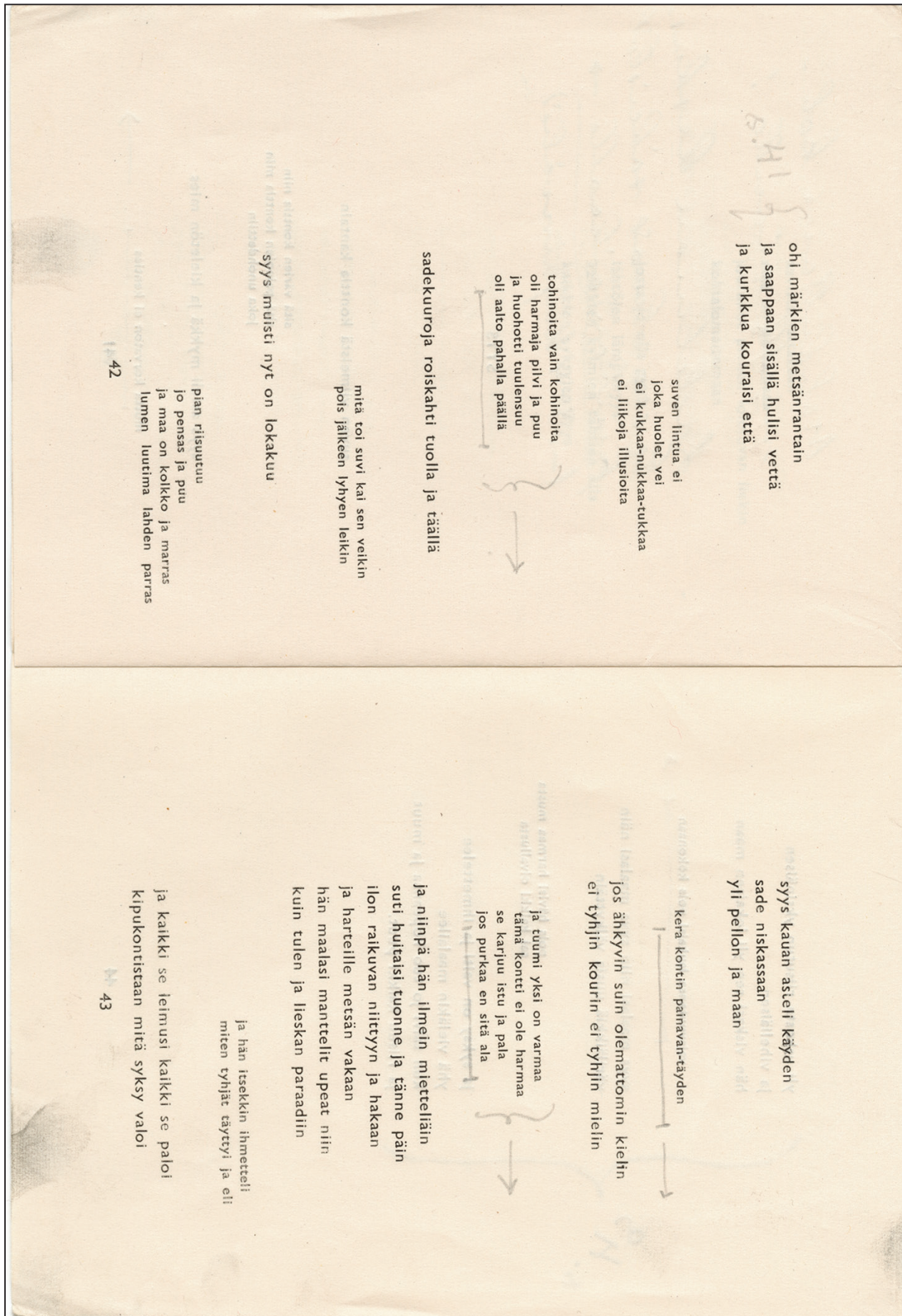


Figure 6. Aaro Hellaakoski, "Syys" (1949b). Second and third page of the proof. Helsinki, Archives of the Finnish Literature Society, SKS (scan SKS).

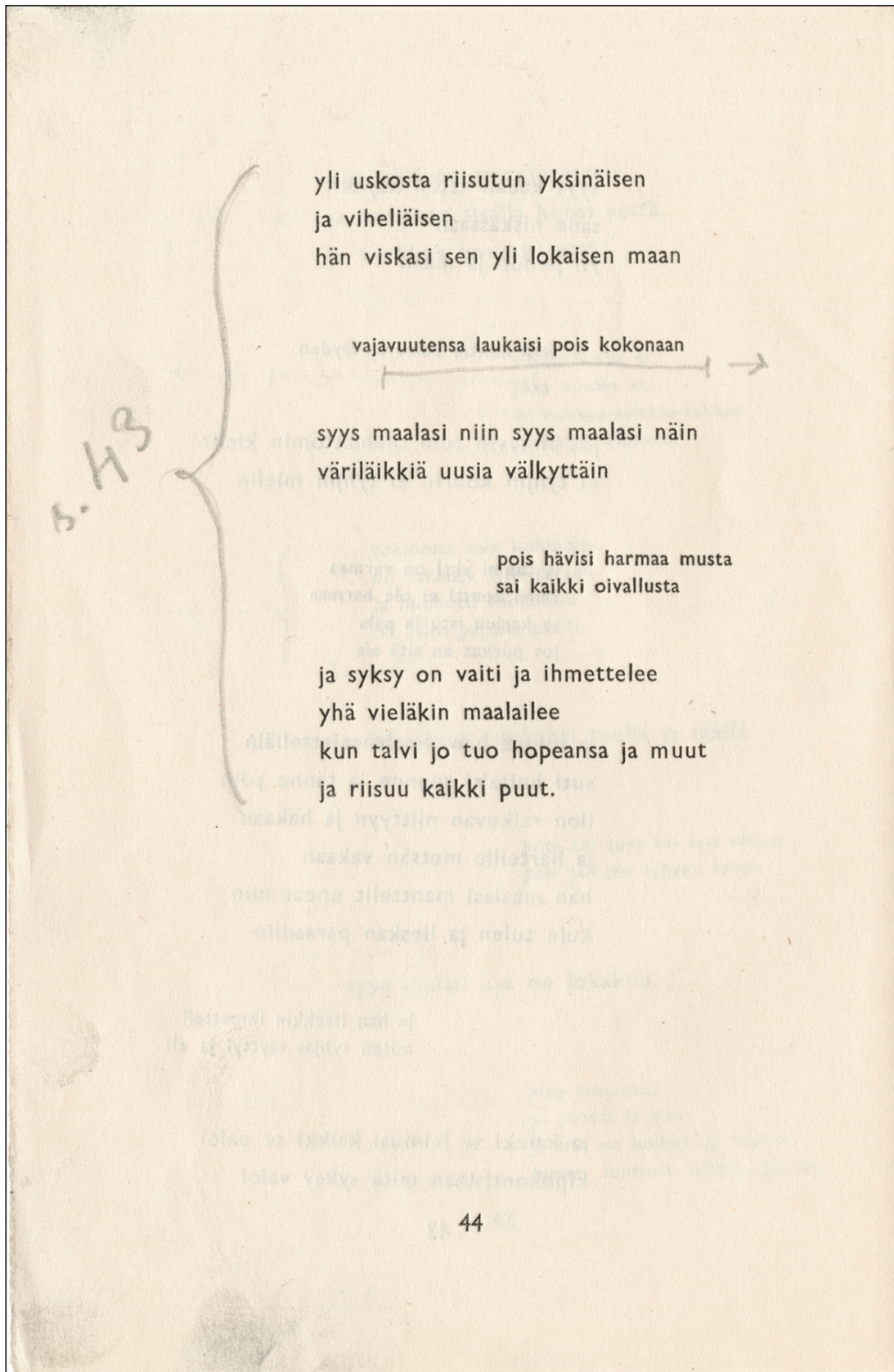


Figure 7. Aaro Hellaakoski, "Syys" (1949b). Last page of the proof.
Helsinki, Archives of the Finnish Literature Society, SKS (scan SKS).

the contrast between type sizes into a contrast between sparse and dense leading.

Seen from the typesetter's point of view, Hellaakoski's experiment is somewhat problematic. There is usually no need to signal the change of leading, because it changes accordingly when the type size is changed. The problem with the manuscript is that the leading between the body text and the indented lines is always double-spaced. This can give the impression that the single-spaced indented lines and groups of lines are separated from the body text with an additional single-spaced blank line. Translating this into letter press would consequently mean adding extra leading between the lines of the body text and the indented lines. In a word, the typesetter interpreted the double space between the body text and the indented lines as a stanza break.

Two factors thus complicated the transmission of the poem "Syys" from manuscript to print. First, Hellaakoski used the typewriter unconventionally but failed to spell out the meaning of the different kinds of leading used in the typescript. Second, the typesetter was apparently not very familiar with typographically experimental poetry. What Hellaakoski actually does with all the different indentations and removal of the stanza breaks can be interpreted as a sort of Cubist twist of perspective. As in a Cubist painting where three-dimensional space is flattened out onto a two-dimensional surface, Hellaakoski replaces the horizontal white space that is used to separate stanzas in traditional poetry with vertical white space—that is, with various types of indentation. This explains why Hellaakoski stressed that "Syys" should look as if it were just one stanza.

The transmission of "Syys" from manuscript to print shows that the experimental and creative use of writing technology enhances the risk of misinterpretation. Textual transmission via writing technologies requires knowledge of the possibilities, constraints, and established conventions of the mediums in question. The creative use of a writing technology puts these conventions aside and opens up room for interpretation. This in turn brings forth the signifying potential of the medium itself, putting it into an interplay with its content, urging us to participate in its interpretation.

To conclude, Hellaakoski's case demonstrates how a typewriter could become part of the writing process without radically changing it. The typewriter enabled Hellaakoski to make the final revisions to his text without having to rely on the proof stage, which in this respect supports McLuhan's idea of the typewriter as a sort of private printing press. However, the typewriter did not replace the pencil or the printing press, but was integrated into the existing writing process side by side with the other writing technologies. Although the typewriter could never compete with the typographic flexibility of a printing press, its print-like characters helped to distance the author from his text. In this sense, the "spatially designated and discrete signs" could also work as a means to control the writing process instead of simply introducing an unconscious element to it, as Kittler (1990, 193) suggested. Although the typewriter estranges the

text from its author, it does not efface his mark. As Butor (1981) stated, seeing the text in type urges the author to make it more idiomatic, as if trying to re-establish the autographic relation between the author and the text. Every typescript has its own identity and reflects the character of its writer, especially if the machine is used in an unconventional fashion. It does not have to be radical and purposeful. Hellaakoski's experimenting with the typewriter in "Syys" shows that it also may simply serve an author's particular writing process.

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